# Gift K

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**Affirming is an essential question of gift-giving in the sense that we help offenders without expecting anything in return.**

Arrigo 2k (Bruce [PhD Prof of Criminology at UNC] “The (Im)possibility of Democratic Justice and the Gift of the Majority” Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 2000)

The gift has no idiosyncratic or artful definition that needs to be addressed. Derrida's concept of **the gift is** simply as it sounds; **something** that is **given to someone by someone else**. Gift, however, is a misleading term. **Once an award is given** to someone, that someone **[they] assume**s **a debt (of gratitude** or a reciprocation of the gift). **The giver of the gift**, in return, **is "consciously** and explicitly" **pleased with** him- or **herself for the show of generosity** (Caputo, 1997, p. 141). **This narcissistic**, self-eudemonical **exchange is** in fact **in­creased if the receiver is** ungrateful or is **unable, through** the **anonymity** of the gift, **to show gratitude. Thus, the offering** that is made **without expectation of explicit gratitude** simply **nourishes the narcissism of the giver.** This is the par­adoxical dimension of the gift. **The sender of the gift,** instead of giving**, receives; and the receiver** of the gift,instead of receiving something, **is in debt** (Caputo, 1997). To avoid mobilizing the circular economy of the gift(the circle of ex­change, of reciprocation, and of reappropriation), the gift must not appear as such. Thus, the giver must not be aware that he or she is giving, and the receiver must not be aware that he or she is receiving. Only under those cir­cumstances would the giver not fuel the fire of narcissistic generosity, and the receiver not assume a debt. As Caputo (1997) notes, the pure gift "could take place only if everything happened below the level of conscious intentionality, where no one intends to give anything to anyone and no one is intentionally conscious of receiving anything" (p. 147). Phenomenologists remind us, following Aristotle's (1925) notion of act and intentionality, that the agent always acts for its own good. **The agent always intends to act for its own good; otherwise, it will not act at all** (e.g., Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1983). Thus, there are always degrees of intentionality—expectation, reciprocation, and reappropriation—on the part of the giver. **The** giving of the **gift[ing]** serves a purpose. It **can be traced to narcis­sism masked by a facade of generosity, or it can be linked to anticipation of something that will come back at some point** sometime **in the future** (Derrida, 1997). This is where the notion of economy arises. What fuels the economy are "entities determined and exchanged, of calculation and bal­anced equations, of equity and sound reason, of laws and regularities" (Caputo, 1997, p. 146). It is the gift that the community has an affinity for in the name of democratic justice. The justice that the gift does, however, authenticates the reality of a pseudo-democracy. An imitation (i.e., illusion) of justice that, as an artifact of simulation, is more real that reality itself; one that is (im)possible in the community that we refer to as democratic society.12

**This leads to narcissistic hegemony in which the giver dominates the receiver and endless violence as the receiver tries to prepay the giver.**

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To ground these observations about gift sending and receiving, the analo­gous example of a loan may be helpful. Let us **suppose** that we have $100.00 and that **you have $1.00. If we** were to **give you some** of our **money** (less than $49 so as not to produce pecuniary equality), we would be subtlely engaged in a number of things. First, following Derrida (1997), **we would be showing off our power** (money) **by exploiting the fact that we have so much more money than you do that we can give some away** and remain in good fiscal standing. Second, **[And] we would be expecting something in return—maybe not immediately, but eventually.** This return could take several forms. **Although we may not expect financial reciprocation, it would be enough knowing that you know that we [helped]** have given currency to **you. Thus, you are now indebted to us and forever grateful**, realizing our good deed: our gift. **Reciprocation** on your part **is impossible. Even if** one day **you** are able to **return our** monetary **favor twofold, we will always know** that it was us who **[we] first hosted you**; extended to and entrusted **in** you an opportunity given **your time of need.** As **the initiators** of such a charity, we **are always in** a position of **power**, and you are always indebted to us**.** This is where the notion of egoism or conceit assumes a hegemonic role. **By giving to you,** a supposed act of gen­erosity in the name of furthering your cause, **we have not empowered you. Rather, we have empowered ourselves**. We have less than subtlely let you know that we have more than you. We have so much more, in fact, that we can afford to give you some. **Our giving becomes, not an act of beneficence, but** a show of power, that is, **narcissistic hegemony!**